more traffic to rail and improve timely delivery of goods:—

1. No general increase in freight rates was announced in the Railway Budget 1998-99.
2. Taper of Freight rates for Coal, Cement and Iron & Steel were modified to reduce freight burden on long lead traffic.
3. The freight classification of Gypsum, Limestone and Dolomite were down graded by one step to give relief of approx. 4 per cent in freight rates.
4. A scheme of volume discount has been introduced for Cement, Clinker, Sponge Iron, Iron and Steel and Iron Ore traffic during the second half of the current year to attract additional traffic to rail.
5. Concerted efforts are being made to reduce transit time and terminal detentions. Some of these include reduction in wagon turn round to 8 days in 1997-98 from 8.5 days in 1996-97, introduction of long distance closed circuit rake movement which does not require examination before 4500 kms journey, induction of diesel and electric locomotive with higher horse power and lesser maintenance requirements and reduction of roadside detachment of wagons.

Beautification of Stations and Platforms in Gujarat

739. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of measures taken to improve/ to beautify the railway stations and platforms at various stations in Gujarat, like Sabarmati, Kheda, Anand, Vadodara etc. during the last two years;

(b) whether further improvement plan has been prepared for beautification of stations and platform; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Details of works taken up/completed in Gujarat during the last two years are as under:

	Particulars of works	Anticipated cost in lakh Rs.
	Works in progress	
1.	(a) Vadodara-Providing second entry to the station from west side along with booking office.	67.68
	(b) Vadodara-Providing Kota stone flooring on platform No. 2, 3 & 4.	19.98
	(c) Vadodara-Kota stone flooring on platform No. 1	14.30
2.	Anand-Construction of new station building	39.98
3.	Nadiad-Extension of cover platform	25.61
4.	Navsari-Extension to covering over island platform No 2 & 3.	27.84
5.	Gandhi Nagar-Construction of new station building	46.21
6.	Improvement to passenger platforms at Nandesari, Bajua, Ranoli and Chhayapuri	14.20
7.	Bharuch-Kota stone flooring on platform	13.30
8.	(a) Ahmedabad-Improvement and renovation of waiting hall	14.99
	(b) Ahmedabad-Mastic asphalting on MG platform	10.00
9.	Ankleshwar-Kota stone flooring on platform	10.30
10.	Hapa-Improvement to passenger platform	9.87
	Hapa-Providing concourse hall	6.20
11.	Okhamandi-Rebuilding of station building	3.50
12.	Rajkot-Kota stone flooring on island platform	13.85
13.	Kandla Port, Bhuj, Gandhidham-Kota stone flooring on platforms.	11.56

	Particulars of works	Cost in lakh Rs.
Works completed		
1.	Maninagar—Shed on Dn passenger platform	7.36
2.	Kim—Sheds on Up and Dn Platforms	14.00
3.	Rajkot—Kota stone flooring on platform	14.07
4.	Dhola Jn. Asphalting pavment on platform etc.	5.94

No works have been sanctioned for Kheda Road and Sabarmati stations.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Details of works sanctioned during 1998-99 are as under:

	Particulars of works	Anticipated cost in lakh Rs.
1.	Vadodara—Beautification of station building	23.58
2.	Surat—Extension of reservation office	20.00
	Surat—Extention of foot-over-bridge	14.90
3.	Vapi—Extension of platform covering and augmentation of Passenger Reservation system.	23.64
4.	Ahmedabad—Provision of foot-over-bridge	12.10
5.	Mehsana—Raising of platform to high level	14.95
6.	Sidhpur—Raising of platform to high level	10.14
	Sidhpur—Improvements to circulating area	9.00
7.	Bhandu—Raising of platform to high level	10.00
8.	Unjha—Improvements to circulating area	8.00
	Unjha—Provisions of platform shed	3.25
9.	Mehsana-Provision of platform shed	6.00
	Mehsana-Improvements to circulating area	4.93
10.	Chhapi—Improvements to circulating area	6.00
	Chhapi—Provision of platform shed	5.40

Unauthorised occupation at Nizamuddin Railway Station

740. SHRI YEDLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Nizamuddin railway station is fast turning into a shelter for vendors, porters and parcel staff; and

(b) the steps taken to remove unauthorised occupation at the railway station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Regular checks are conducted by the Ticket Checking staff in association with the Railway Protection Force/Government Railway Police personnel to check the entry and movement of unauthorised hawkers, beggars, porters and other anti-social elements at major stations.

Declaring Salem an Important Destination

741. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Salem has become an important destination in linking the Northern and Southern parts of rail routes;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in declaring Salem as Divisional Railway Headquarters which is pending for several years; and

(c) whether Government would take necessary steps in this regard on priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.